

TULSA WORLD

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Suit filed over state budget

Lawmakers seek to get a revenue failure declared in budget fight with Stitt

By Barbara Hoberock
Tulsa World

OKLAHOMA CITY — Legislative leaders on Tuesday filed suit against the Oklahoma Board of Equalization stemming from a budget dispute



Stitt

with Gov. Kevin Stitt. The lawsuit asks the Oklahoma Supreme Court to force the Oklahoma Board of Equalization, chaired by the governor, to declare a revenue failure for fiscal year 2020 and allow the state to tap its Rainy Day Fund. On April 6, lawmakers

passed three budget stabilization bills designed to prevent state agency budget cuts for the current fiscal year. The cuts would be 6.2% during the last quarter of the fiscal year. That same day, Stitt abruptly canceled a meeting where the Board of Equalization was poised to declare a revenue failure, citing technical difficulties with the bills. The governor has expressed concerns that the package cut

one of his projects, the digital transformation fund, but did not cut other state agencies. Stitt signed two of the three to fund state government through April. He asked lawmakers to return to the Capitol to come up with another measure to avoid cuts for May and June. Stitt took no action on Senate Bill 199, which would ap-

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American OK'd for \$5.8B in assistance

The federal funding is to support American Airlines' salaries and benefits

By Rhett Morgan
Tulsa World

American Airlines Group Inc. announced Tuesday that the U.S. Department of the Treasury has approved \$5.8 billion in financial assistance from the Payroll Support Program created through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security — or CARES — Act. About 5,400 people work at Tech Ops-Tulsa, American's largest maintenance base. The federal funds, which are targeted to support team member salaries and benefits, will come in two forms: a direct grant of \$4.1 billion and a low-interest rate loan of \$1.7 billion. In addition to the \$5.8 billion, American expects to

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COVID-19 • First patient diagnosed in Oklahoma donates his plasma to help others in need



Curtis Barone of Tulsa, the first patient diagnosed with COVID-19 in Oklahoma, talks in his home office on Tuesday about his recovery and donation of plasma to help others. STEPHEN PINGRY/Tulsa World

Giving unto others

By Corey Jones
Tulsa World

In the past two months, Curtis Barone has gone from enduring apprehension from others to being in demand for carrying blood that might be a COVID-19 patient's best shot at survival. The 56-year-old's first overseas trip to London and Rome to visit a son who was studying abroad resulted in his contracting the novel coronavirus. He flew back into Tulsa on Feb. 23, nearly a week before the U.S. issued a travel advisory for Italy and seven days

before any symptoms appeared. On March 6 he became the unnamed first COVID-19 patient whose positive test result was announced in Oklahoma, while he was self-isolated in his master bedroom. He's since tallied another unforgettable first — the initial recovered patient in Tulsa to donate his antibody-rich blood to the American Red Cross for use in a critical patient. His "convalescent plasma" was infused Saturday night into an Ascension St. John Medical Center patient who had been on a ventilator for a week. She was weaned off the machine

a little more than 36 hours later with a good prognosis for recovery. "That feels really good; that feels nice," Barone said Tuesday afternoon during an interview with the Tulsa World. "It's a negative situation. Everybody gets to encounter it, but not everybody gets to experience it — if that makes sense. "All of the U.S. is impacted by this — 97% has some sort of shelter-in-place — so everybody's having to deal with this in some form or fashion. But only those that are infected that are

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Virus hits nursing home in Grove

More than 60 residents and staff have tested positive for coronavirus

By Kaylea M. Hutson-Miller
For the Tulsa World

GROVE — More than 60 residents and staff members in a northeastern Oklahoma nursing home have tested positive for COVID-19. On Monday morning, after one day of testing last week, officials with the Oklahoma State Department of Health reported that 37 residents and 19 staff members at Grove Nursing Center had tested positive for the new coronavirus. Since then, an additional seven cases have been reported. The dozens of positive tests came after rumors circulated in the community that previous cases of the illness may have gone unreported to the state, according to a state lawmaker who

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Financial assistance topic during virtual town hall

Money is starting to flow into Oklahoma, senator says during Tulsa World's latest 'Let's Talk'

By Rhett Morgan
Tulsa World

About \$2 billion already has been allocated to the state of Oklahoma through the federal government's Paycheck Protection Program, U.S. Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla., said. He was a guest on the Tulsa World's "Let's Talk" virtual town hall series, which focused Tuesday on economic recovery efforts for those affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Nationwide, Lankford said more than



700,000 businesses and nonprofits have been assisted by PPP, a Small Business Administration program that authorizes forgivable loans to small businesses to pay their employees during the coronavirus outbreak. "A lot of people haven taken advantage of this," he said. "I would encourage folks to take the next step." "... It's very important to go get con-

nected. Do it sooner rather than later. We are talking about an extension of that program. But for right now, there is no guarantee of an extension." Lankford joined virtual panelists Rose Washington, CEO of Tulsa Economic Development Corp., and Robin Roberson, executive director of the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission. Sponsors of the town hall series are the George Kaiser Family Foundation, TTCU Federal Credit Union and OSU Medicine. Folks nationwide have begun receiving \$1,200 checks as part of the \$2.2 trillion CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act. Any adult who is not someone else's dependent, who has a valid Social Security number and who earns up to \$75,000 annually will receive a \$1,200 payment. The payment steadily declines for those

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